

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1-27 (Canceled).

28. (Original) Computer-implemented and Internet-based method of disputing an invoice from a vendor to a customer, comprising the steps of:

accessing a database record corresponding to the invoice to be disputed over a Web site of the vendor;

selecting a reason code for the dispute along with an identification of a disputed amount;

validating a Credit Memo Request incorporating the selected reason code and the disputed amount to create a pending Credit Memo Request;

causing the Credit Memo Request to be sent to and routed through at least one of a selected process for the selected reason code, a selected hierarchy of persons empowered to approve Credit Memo Request incorporating the selected reason code and a primary approver for the selected reason code;

receiving a notification upon approval or rejection of the pending Credit Memo Request, the disputed amount being automatically credited to the disputed invoice when the pending Credit Memo Request is approved.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein the selecting step selects a reason code from among a group of reason codes including freight charges, taxes, shipping charges, duplicate invoice, specific invoice line and at least one vendor-defined reason code.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein when the selected reason code does not fit a reason for requesting the Credit Memo, the selecting step further includes a step of adding explanatory comments to a blank field, thereby enabling the established hierarchy of persons empowered to approve the validated Credit Memo Request and the primary approver for the selected reason code to process the Credit Memo Request.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein the validating step includes a step of submitting the Credit Memo Request if the Credit Memo Request is correct and includes the step of correcting the Credit Memo Request if any information appearing thereon is incorrect.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein the validating step includes a step of displaying the Credit Memo Request for the customer and giving the customer a first option to submit the Credit Memo Request to execute the causing step and a second option to return to an earlier screen to correct any incorrect information on the Credit Memo Request.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein the reason codes, process, hierarchy and primary approver are defined by the vendor upon enabling the computer-implemented method.

34. (Original) The method of Claim 28, further comprising a step of authenticating a customer before allowing the customer to carry out the accessing step.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 28, further including a step of accessing a current status of the pending Credit Memo request in real time.

36. (Original) The method of Claim 28, further including a step of marking the disputed invoice with a legend or indicia indicating that a Credit Memo Request is pending there against.

37-39 (Canceled)

40. (Original) An Internet-based electronic system for disputing an invoice from a vendor to a customer, the system comprising:

a database configured to store the invoice;

a computer adapted to connect to the Internet;

a Web site, the Web site being controlled by the vendor and accessible by the computer, the Web site being configured to allow a customer using the computer to remotely access the invoice and to dispute the invoice by:

selecting a reason code for the dispute and at least a disputed amount;

validating a Credit Memo Request incorporating the selected reason code and the disputed amount to create a pending Credit Memo Request, and

causing the Credit Memo Request to be sent to be processed through a workflow engine to send and route the Credit Memo Request through at least one of a selected process for the selected reason code, a selected hierarchy of persons empowered to approve Credit Memo Request incorporating the selected reason code and a primary approver for the selected reason code.

41. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the workflow engine is further configured to send a notification upon approval or rejection of the pending Credit Memo Request, the disputed amount being automatically credited to the disputed invoice when the pending Credit Memo Request is approved.

42. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the Web site is further configured to allow the customer to add explanatory comments to a blank field, to enable the selected hierarchy of persons empowered to approve the validated Credit Memo Request and the primary approver for the selected reason code to process the Credit Memo Request when the selected reason code does not fit a reason for requesting the Credit Memo Request.

43. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the Web site is further configured to allow a submission of the Credit Memo Request if the Credit Memo Request is correct and the correction of the Credit Memo Request if any information therein is incorrect.

44. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the reason codes, process, hierarchy and primary approver are adapted to be predefined by the vendor.

45. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the Web site is further configured to authenticate a customer before allowing the customer to access the invoice.

46. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the Web site is further configured to enable real time access to a status of the pending Credit Memo request.

47. (Original) The system of Claim 40, wherein the Web site is further configured to mark the disputed invoice with a legend or indicia indicating that a Credit Memo Request is pending there against.